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# Guide

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## What Has the Council Done?

Hans Kung

## The Teachings of Jesus

Joseph V. Gallagher, C.S.P.

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IT SEEMS TO ME

## Living Room Dialogues

Ecumenism is a new dimension in the Catholic Church and it is here to stay. The *Decree on Ecumenism* embraces it warmly and sets forth the principles and practices which should guide Catholics in an age which desperately needs and seeks greater unity. It is difficult to see how any Catholic can henceforth oppose or even ignore this providential movement. A large part of being a faithful Catholic today consists in recognizing Ecumenism as God's gift, welcoming it gratefully and searching for one's personal role in it.

Christ prayed for the unity of his people—not merely a meeting of minds among clerical leaders and scholars. The painstaking labor of church officials and the erudite are indispensable. But this will not get very far if there is no corresponding change of heart among the Christian masses. The fact that the common people of the various churches seldom meet as Christians is in itself one of the larger obstacles to unity. It is for this reason that many may find an answer to this difficulty in *Living Room Dialogues*, published jointly by the National Council of Churches and the Paulist Press. (Reviewed elsewhere in this issue of *Guide*).

The book capitalizes on the American custom of serious talk in a sociable atmosphere. It shows how divided Christians can meet, pray, read the Scriptures and discuss religious realities with a view to wider understanding of agreements and differences. If there is a better plan for a peoples' ecumenical dialogue, it has escaped my attention.

As with liturgical reform, the people will learn to be ecumenical by study and action. Education in the liturgy accompanies active participation in the liturgy. Vatican II faced calculated risks in every one of its documents. But the worst consequences of these risks are minimized if the people are prepared for a renewed Church in a new era. An informed, charitable and "open" Catholic laymen can well participate in "Living Room Dialogues." And risks will be reduced to the extent that he knows the documents of Vatican II on Liturgy, the Church and Ecumenism.

JOHN T. MCGINN, C.S.P.

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# What Has The Council Done?

Hans Kung

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS; DEFECTS; CONTINUING TASKS

Is it too soon to write about the results of the second Vatican Council? To write about the history of a period in which one lives is always problematical, especially when one is personally involved. Aren't we still too close to the Council, and won't we find ourselves in this position for some time to come? The real historical significance of Vatican II will not be known for several decades. Who would have thought at the time that the rather unpretentious Council of Trent would have given its name to a period of four hundred years—a period which so many now feel is over?

An attempt can be made to give no more than a *preliminary estimate*. Different observers will give widely varying evaluations of the results. To facilitate the discussion, a *résumé* will be attempted, a *résumé* which, although it proceeds from the Catholic point of view—in fact from the point of view of one engaged in the work of the Council—will nevertheless strive to take into account non-Catholic Christianity as well as the secular world.

Our question is this: what has the Council *achieved*? Despite all justifiable criticism, no one will regard it as an attempt to paint an over-optimistic picture if the positive achievements of the Council are underlined now that it is over. It would

be an oversimplification to say that a genuine pessimism prevailed during the preparation of the conciliar decrees and a genuine optimism at the time of their promulgation. But there is some truth in the statement. That which the Council did not accomplish need not and cannot be overlooked. There are certain decrees (e.g. the decree on the communications media, the Declaration on Christian Education) which are hardly significant for the future. There are others which lack proportion, which are in many places ambiguous or which simply are not forward-looking. There is probably not a single decree which proved completely satisfactory to the bishops.

In practically all of the doctrinal decrees, a solid exegetical, and often enough, historical foundation is wanting—a price exacted by the almost total absence of Catholic exegesis at the Council. Often enough, diplomatic compromises made a patchwork of precisely the most critical matters—for example scripture and tradition, papal primacy and collegiality. These were com-

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promises between a majority, which generally had the most serious and vital theology on their side and the relatively small curial party which controlled the Council machinery and made thorough use of this control right to the end. None of this should be glossed over. The episcopacy and the Church will have to keep a close watch to make sure that many of the achievements are not subsequently lost in red tape. And the theology of the post-conciliar period will be kept busy with the work of interpretation, explanation and constant revision in thoroughly honest and critical theological objectivity.

In spite of this, it is important not to look upon the undeniable obscurities, compromises, omissions, exaggerations and mistakes hypercritically but to regard them with hope, as tasks for the future, in the spirit of the Council, which did not want to close any doors. There is a sense in which the Council, that is, the realization of the Council, *began* on December 8, 1965, and in preparation for this future, rather than finding fault with the Council for what it failed to accomplish, it is better to search for the immanent possibilities in what it did accomplish.

The question is, therefore: what doors have been opened? Where has the light broken through? How is it possible to separate that which the Church has picked up in the course of her two-thousand-year history? We can distinguish five general areas: What has the Council achieved in reference to: 1. other Christians in general; 2. Protestants and Orthodox in particular; 3. the non-Christian religions; 4. the modern world; 5. the inner reform of the Catholic Church itself. The answers to these questions will reveal the tasks of the immediate future.

## ECUMENISM

### I. THE ECUMENICAL AGE:

What has the Council accomplished in regard to other Christians? Decisive accomplishments were made, particularly in the decree on Ecumenism.

1. That Catholics share the blame for the disunity of the Church was formally recognized and the Council as well as the Pope have asked other Christians for forgiveness. At the same time the necessity of continu-

ing reform was recognized: *Ecclesia semper reformanda*—the renewal of the Church in life and doctrine according to the Gospel.

2. The other Christian communities are recognized as *churches*: until now only individuals were recognized, and then as "heretics" or "schismatics"—now the communities themselves are recognized, and not merely as communities but expressly as *ecclesiastical* communities or as *churches*. There is a common Christian foundation in all the churches which is perhaps more important than that which divides them.

3. An *ecumenical attitude* is expected of the whole Church. The genuine conversion of Catholics themselves and prayer in an ecumenical spirit; then the mutual effort to understand one another and sympathetic dialogue, the recognition of what is good in others and learning from them, the recognition of the faith, love and baptism of other Christians; finally, theological and historical research carried on in the ecumenical spirit.

## COOPERATION

4. Cooperation with other Christians is to be encouraged in every way. Practical cooperation is possible in the entire social domain. Even more, common prayer is desirable (John XXIII was the first pope to pray with other Christians) as well as a growing liturgical fellowship, especially in the Liturgy of the Word (think for example of the impressive service of the Word conducted by Paul VI and the non-Catholic observers before the end of the Council!); and finally, theological discussions on a level of equality. Many discussions are already in progress. The participation of non-Catholic observers at the Council is taken as much for granted today as the participation of Catholic observers in the various committees of the World Council of Churches.

In order to evaluate these basic and tangible results which are briefly listed here, one could ask the question: what would have happened in the last 400 years of church-history if the Council of Trent had made these epoch-making decisions, as it well might have? But the present is more important: the ecumenical age has finally and irrevocably begun for the Catholic Church with Vatican II.



In this connection, the Decree on the Eastern Churches (which had often been regarded as little more than an appendage of the Latin church) is also of importance for further ecumenical development in regard to the Protestants. The Eastern churches enjoy the same rights as those of the West; they have both the right and duty to cultivate their own independent liturgies and canonical usages (Patriarchs named by the bishops), their own spirituality and theology. Diversity strengthens rather than harms the unity of the Church.

In regard to the Orthodox churches (those not in communion with Rome), these are the present dispositions: the rebaptism of Orthodox converts is not required nor is the re-ordination of Orthodox priests; Orthodox Christians can, if they wish, receive the sacraments in Catholic churches and conversely, Catholics in Orthodox churches if no Catholic priest is available. Mixed marriages between Catholics and Orthodox are valid even if they have not taken place in Catholic churches. It is permitted to use one church for both Catholic and Orthodox services. Is there any clearer indication of the beginning of a new Christian age than the solemn and simultaneous removal of the ban of excommunication in Rome and Constantinople shortly before the end of the council, the ban which marked the beginning of the almost 1000-year schism? This courageous act is indicative of the sincere desire for reconciliation on the part of Paul VI. What began with the kiss of peace between Paul VI and the Patriarch of Constantinople in Jerusalem in 1964 has been advanced here in a form, the positive consequences of which for the whole of Christianity can scarcely be estimated.

## REFORMATIONS

### II. THE CONCERNS OF THE REFORMERS:

What in particular has the Council achieved in regard to Protestant Christians? Here, too, the Council can point to results of an epoch-making character. A number of the central concerns of the reformers have been taken up. For example:

1. *Greater esteem for Holy Scripture:* a) In *Liturgy:* The liturgy is to bear the biblical stamp. The singing of psalms in the vernacular is encouraged, as well as preaching according to scriptural norms (every

Sunday sermon is to be above all an explanation of the scriptural text). A new cycle of scriptural readings with greater variety and spread over a number of years is already in preparation. b.) In the whole *life of the Church:* Instead of emphasizing the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Bible, as the Council of Trent did, now modern translations from the original text are encouraged, translations which can be used together with non-Catholics. (In the English-speaking world during this past year, Catholics adopted a modern Protestant version: similar plans are afoot in Germany.) Instead of forbidding Bible reading by the laity as was previously the case (right up into the nineteenth century), both clergy and laity are repeatedly encouraged to read the Bible; the significance of the Bible for both religious instruction and piety is emphasized.

## WORD OF GOD

c) In *theology:* The Magisterium has no priority over the Word of God but is rather the servant of the Word. It is *not* common Church teaching that the truths of revelation are contained *partly* in Scripture and partly in Tradition. Biblical studies are encouraged and are to be the soul of theology. In the face of all of the conservative attacks (the controversy over the Pontifical Biblical Institute) the historical-critical method (literary genres, *Formgeschichte*) has received explicit approval. Scriptural inerrancy is claimed only for religious truth and not for statements of a scientific or historical nature.

2. *A genuine liturgy of the Word:* here many concerns of the reformers can be seen to be fulfilled: a) instead of the earlier clerical liturgy, a liturgy in which the laity exercise their common priesthood, a sense of community emphasized by the more intelligent arrangement of the service, active participation of the entire congregation in prayer and song, and in sharing the Body of the Lord; private masses de-emphasized (concelebration now possible), celebration in common preferable in principle. b) instead of the former practice of reading Scripture in the Latin language which no one understood, listening to the Word of God proclaimed in an intelligible language. (cf. 1a); c) instead of the former



thoroughly Romanized liturgy, *adaptation to different national cultures*: recognition of the competence of national episcopal conferences in liturgical matters in place of the former exclusive competence of the Holy See. d) in place of the former confusion and obscurity, *simplification and concentration on the essential*. Revision of all the rites with the result that the Mass will resemble the Last Supper more closely.

e) likewise, reform of the liturgy of the *sacraments* (particularly of Baptism), reform of the Church year (reducing the number of feasts of the saints); reform of the *breviary*, by shortening it and introducing the vernacular; f) the positive resolution of many controversial points, often argued about as though they were matters of faith: vernacular worship and the granting of the chalice to the laity, a practice which is likewise permitted in principle.

### THE LAITY

3. *Greater esteem for the laity*: the direct access of the laity to Holy Scripture and the realization of a liturgy in which the laity participate actively, are in themselves a fulfillment of this third concern of the reformers. In addition there are the numerous theological references to the meaning of the laity in the Church which run through all the documents of the Council, and the implicit criticism of clericalism contained in them. The Constitution on the Church is of more importance in this connection than the decree on the lay apostolate; the Church is essentially the people of God. The laity constitute the universal priesthood of the faithful, all of whom participate in the royal, priestly and prophetic office of Christ. Spiritual charisms and the vocation to holiness are not only granted to isolated individuals, but to all in the Church. On the practical level, each bishop is to form a pastoral council, made up of priests engaged in pastoral work and of laity. In the decree on the priesthood, greater respect for the laity in parish life is strongly commended, in sharing the work of the parish with them, giving them freedom of action and free play for their initiative.

4. *Adapting the Church to the nations*: As against an over-centralized system, the importance of the Church on the local, dioc-

san and national level is emphasized again and again. The practical work of decentralization is to be the goal of national or regional *bishops' conferences* which are to be juridically constituted where they do not yet exist, and are to meet regularly. The liturgy offers the first example of adaptation, but it is also to make itself felt in other areas, such as seminaries, the missions, etc. The decision of the French Bishops' Conference is to permit the revival of the way in which the bishops of a given country can exercise their competence. The Roman Curia itself is to be internationalized.

### POPULAR PIETY

5. *The reform of popular piety*: The answers given by the bishops' conferences to the *question of indulgences* show that the medieval theory and practice in regard to indulgences, which played an important role in triggering the Lutheran reformation, is now passé. The reform of the laws of fast and abstinence, laws which frequently obscured specifically Christian values, is in progress. Finally, the dangers of an exaggerated mariology which can be reconciled neither with scripture nor with the absolute centrality of Christ, have been recognized, particularly through the refusal of Vatican II to accept a separate Marian schema and the incorporation of this material into the schema on the Church. Despite the desires of many, no further Marian dogmas were defined.

When we look at this whole area, it is clear that much of what the Council did is of a preliminary, imperfect, even questionable character, and that a number of important things are missing. But it is nevertheless permissible to ask this question: what would Martin Luther do if he were born in the Catholic Church of today? Some people would answer this question with a smirk and tell us that he would have been a Council *peritus*, and there is this much truth in that answer: many of his justified demands have in great measure been complied with by this Council. And another question must be added: wouldn't it be the task of the Protestant churches, on their part, to approach us in a more self-critical spirit, and—in the spirit of *ecclesia semper reformanda*—with reformation of the reformation?



## CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

### III. THE TRUTH CONTAINED IN THE NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS:

What has the Council achieved in regard to the other world religions and particularly in regard to Judaism? Christians (and not only Catholics) have more to make up for in regard to the Jews than in regard to any other group. The monstrous crimes of Nazi anti-Semitism would have been impossible without the hidden and, often enough, open "Christian" anti-Semitism of more than 1500 years, an anti-Semitism which was manifest even in the Council debates.

The Council, here again following the personal initiative of John XXIII, is attempting to place the relationship of the Catholic Church to Judaism on a new and positive basis. The Church proclaims her indissoluble unity with Israel; she also appeals to Israel's patriarchs and Holy Scriptures. Jesus and the early Church have their origins in Israel. Even though the majority of the Jews rejected Jesus as Messiah, they are in no sense accursed, but remain the chosen people. The responsibility for Jesus' death cannot be laid upon all of the Jews of His own day, still less on those of our own day. Sermons and religious instruction, study and discussion should aid mutual understanding and esteem. The Church condemns all manifestations of anti-Semitism, hate and persecution. She rejects all discrimination based upon race, color, class or religion.

The few phrases which were not included in the text are not decisive for the future. The Catholic Church has spoken out without ambiguity against all anti-Semitism and for cooperation with the Jews, thereby introducing a new period of Judaeo-Christian relations after 2000 years of Church history. To appreciate the change which has taken place, one need only compare the declaration of Vatican II with the anti-Semitic measures of the best of the medieval councils, the Fourth Council of the Lateran, just 750 years ago.

Vatican II is also trying to improve the relationship of the Church to the other world religions, a relationship which was often quite strained in missionary lands. This same declaration on the non-Christian religions affirms that all the peoples of the earth with their various religions form one

community; these religions attempt to answer the same vital questions in different ways. Although the Church sees the fullness of truth in Christ and His message, she does not on that account reject anything true and holy in the other religions—rays of the one truth which enlightens all men. In discussion and cooperation, Christians should recognize and promote the spiritual, moral and cultural values of the other religions. The Church looks with great respect on Hinduism and Buddhism and especially on Islam, which together with her also worships the one God and honors Jesus as a prophet. The age-old enmity between Christianity and Islam must give way to understanding and to common efforts to achieve social justice, peace and freedom.

The declaration closes with a profession of belief in the brotherhood of all men under one father. It is a remarkable fact and one of significance for the relationship of the Church to the modern world, that the oft-rejected slogan of the French Revolution plays a special role in the conciliar documents: *liberté, égalité, fraternité*.

## CHURCH AND WORLD

### IV. THE SECULAR WORLD

Unlike Vatican I, Vatican II recognizes that the world has come of age. Vatican II has definitely broken with the medieval world view which prevailed in the Church into the 19th and 20th centuries.

1. The relationship of the Church to the world is handled principally in the Constitution on the Church in the modern world. The attitude of the Church toward human progress is fundamentally positive, although naturally enough, not uncritical. The Church desires a profound solidarity and cooperation with the rest of mankind. Reading the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel, she desires dialogue in place of polemic, authentic witness in place of triumphalism, answering all questions. Based on the Gospel itself, she takes her stand for dignity, freedom and the rights of man, for the development and improvement of human society and its institutions and for sound human creativity.

2. The same Constitution concretizes the positive attitude of the Church particularly



in the following points: a) In the sympathetic and self-critical position taken toward the various forms of atheism (Communism is not mentioned by name in order to avoid political misunderstanding); b) In the emphasis on mutual love and human responsibility in married life (despite the unfortunate modifications forced on the Council at the last minute which by no means exclude an urgently necessary papal decision in favor of birth control); c) In affirming responsible freedom for cultural creativity, and the autonomy to which science and serious theological research are entitled; d) In taking the part of the weak, whether nations or individuals, in economic, social and political life; e) In the sharp rejection of war and particularly of atomic war (only a small and non-representative group within the North American hierarchy expressed opposition to the passage concerning the danger of possessing atomic weapons) and in cooperation in the building of an international community of nations (the impressive conciliatory gestures of the Polish and German hierarchies at the end of the Council provide a splendid example).

### RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

3. Finally, the declaration on religious freedom belongs to the great forward-looking documents of the Council, despite the unfortunate changes in the text which only appear in the last edition. It affirms:

a) *Every man* has the right to freedom of religion: The unhindered exercise of religious freedom by individuals and communities, in public and in private, according to the norms of conscience is founded upon the dignity of the human person. b) *Every religious community* has the right to unhindered public exercise of their religion according to their laws; they are to be free in respect to their worship, the choice, training and designation of their pastors, communication with their church authorities and with communities of the same confession throughout the world, the building of churches and the possession of material goods, public witness to their faith through the communications media (provided they use acceptable means), and contributing to the structure of their society.

c) Society, the state and the church, are

to protect and further religious freedom. Wherever a certain religious community is granted a particular legal position on the basis of its historical development, the rights of all citizens and religious communities to religious freedom must be recognized and protected. The fact that the free exercise of religion is limited by the rights of others and by the common good may not be used as a pretext for the state to proceed against one particular religious community in an arbitrary or partisan manner. Fundamentally to human society is the principle: as much freedom as possible, only as much limitation of that freedom as is necessary. If the Church's engagement for religious freedom is a new phenomenon, nevertheless it is a following of the Gospel of Christ.

It can certainly be assumed that precisely this last declaration will have some effect on the situation of Protestants in Catholic countries (and perhaps even on the removal of anti-Catholic constitutional articles in countries such as Switzerland). In any case, all we need do is to compare these documents of Vatican II with the condemnations contained in the *Syllabus of Errors* before Vatican I, to see how much has changed in the attitude of the Church toward the achievements of the modern world. To speak of this profound change as "organic development," as Catholic theologians often do, to pretend that what was implicit became explicit, is sheer apologetic construction. Why can't a Church, which according to the common judgment of Catholics *can* err, also show that it is capable of truly Christian conversion and of changing its views? Such a Church is far more convincing to the present world than one whose motto is the ecclesiastical equivalent of "the party is (and was) always right."

### INSTITUTIONAL REFORM

#### V. THE REFORM OF THE CHURCH:

What has the Catholic Church done to reform herself? Everything said before could be repeated here: what the Council did in regard to other Christians (particularly in the realization of the concerns of the Orthodox and the Reformers) and in regard to the secular world and the other religions, is the result of an inner change and renewal which has taken hold of the Church herself. The liturgical, biblical, ecu-



menical and pastoral renewal which has fulfilled, at least partially, demands for reform that have been raised in the Church for decades or centuries, will not be recounted again here. But certain new aspects in the Church's theological understanding of herself and in the structure of the Church should be brought together.

## SELF-UNDERSTANDING

1. *The Church's new understanding of herself:* The clerical, juridical and triumphal understanding of herself which characterized the Church during the middle ages and the Counter-Reformation, is decidedly in the process of change in the Constitution on the Church. Here the Church is no longer understood simply as a supernatural authoritarian society, with the pope at the top as an absolute monarch, then the episcopal and priestly aristocracy, and finally, in the role of passive subjects, the faithful. The Constitution no longer begins with the hierarchy. The Church is seen from within as a mystery, not to be confused with political organisms, and described in the various biblical images. The most fundamental of these is the understanding of the Church as the people of God, a people on pilgrimage, both in the sense of being sinners and of possessing their definitive goal only in the future, a people ever ready for new reform. The whole Church exists in the local churches. Those who hold office do not stand above but in the midst of the people of God; they are no more or less than the *servants* of the people, who, as a whole, share in the priestly character and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

2. *The Pope and the Bishops:* The Pope is not an absolute monarch. Without prejudice to his primacy, it is stated in the Constitution on the Church that the bishops together with the Pope have a common, *collegial* responsibility for the Church. This is the case not only when they are gathered for an ecumenical council, but always. In the future, this collegiality will manifest itself in and function through the Bishops' Synod, which was inaugurated by the Pope at the beginning of the fourth session, following the wishes of the Council, and will meet for the first time in 1967. Unlike the college of cardinals, its composition will be

proportional and it will be made up principally of the elected representatives of the *bishops' conferences*.

These bishops' conferences constitute an essential element of decentralization. They are to meet regularly and under certain circumstances; they can make decisions binding on all bishops. They are to redraw *diocesan* lines, so that the dioceses will be neither too large nor too small (when necessary, transferring the episcopal see to a more suitable place); in the same way, the boundaries of ecclesiastical provinces and regions are to be redrawn. The bishops have proper, independent and immediate authority over their dioceses. In the future they will be able to dispense from canon law in individual cases, except where this power is explicitly limited.

## CURIAL CHANGES

3 *The Roman Curia:* It is to be reformed in a way corresponding to the demands of the present day and age and to the diversity of the Church, and in respect to its competence, its mode of procedure, and its relation to the episcopacy; it is to be at the service of the bishops. Above all, it is to be internationalized (it is to include diocesan bishops and laity). The competence of papal nuncios and delegates is to be more exactly defined in respect to that of the Bishop. Before the end of the Council, Paul VI affirmed again his desire to reform the Curia—a desire expressed so clearly in the address to the same Curia before the second session of the Council.

The reform of the inquisitorial authority, the Holy Office, is the first step in Paul VI's reform of the Curia. This authority, now called "The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith," loses its position as the supreme congregation. Its mode of procedure is now subject to canon law. (Previously secret procedures are to be made public.) It is no longer possible for one to be condemned without the opportunity for self-defense and the competent bishops are granted a hearing. The authority is to be receptive to new findings: a close relationship to the biblical commission, the consultation with experts, organization of conferences of scholars. It must be recognized that some improvement has already been made in the work of this body which came in for



such hard criticism from Cardinal Frings at the Council; since the beginning of the Council, not a single book has been placed on the Index, and competent authorities assure that this will remain the case in the future. In certain cases where the Holy Office had made mistakes, the decisions were explicitly withdrawn.

### THE PRIESTHOOD

4. *The priesthood and the formation of priests:* a) The specific task of the priest within the framework of the universal priesthood of all is the special form of service involved in the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, and leadership of the congregation. The priest is not to be separated from the people, but is to be united with them in a brotherly manner in the midst of the world. His whole existence as a human being is to bear witness to the Gospel; between bishops and priests, a friendly relationship of mutual counsel and cooperation should be the rule. In each diocese a senate of priests is to be formed, which represents all priests of the diocese, and offers the bishop effective aid in administering the diocese. The priesthood and manual labor are not mutually exclusive. The priests of those churches of the East united with Rome, who, in accordance with ancient tradition, are married men, are no less priests. Even in the Latin church, fathers of families will be eligible for the office of deacon which is to be established.

b) The Council intentionally made no detailed prescriptions for the *formation of priests*. The bishops' conferences are to make arrangements for the seminaries in their own lands, and they are to be revised at regular intervals, and approved by the Pope. In this way, priestly formation is always to be adapted to particular temporal and local conditions. For the clergy, traditional forms of piety are to yield to the Gospel. The study of the Bible is to be especially promoted as the soul of all theology. Dogmatic theology also is to proceed from biblical themes toward systematic formulation by way of the history of dogma and theology. Methods of instruction are to be re-examined. Questions which are out of date are no longer to be treated.

Openness to the world is to be fostered

in every way: knowledge of contemporary philosophy and the progress of the natural sciences; being well-informed of developments that characterize the present day; a deep concern for human values, especially those demanded in our own day; preparation for discussion with modern man and the ability to listen to him; receptivity for different human situations; knowledge of the specific churches and non-Christian religions relevant to each country; practical pastoral training. Religious disciplines should be adapted to the age of the students and should lead to greater independence and reasonable freedom.

### RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS

c) The individual *religious congregations* (their general chapters) have to carry out a profound renewal and permit experimentation. Return to the sources (primarily the Gospel and not the Rule) and adaptation to the changed circumstances, are the criteria according to which all constitutions, prescriptions and customs are to be re-examined; out-of-date ordinances are to be dropped, without the multiplication of rules. Institutes and religious houses that no longer serve a useful purpose should not be permitted to accept any more novices and in so far as possible should be joined to more viable communities.

5. *The Missions:* The missionary task of the Church is given a theological foundation, without denying the salvation of the unbaptized. Whatever the younger churches can adopt from the customs, traditions, teaching, and art of their particular national cultures, that they are to do. With a view to this task, theological research should re-think the biblical revelation; the way of thinking proper to different peoples is to be respected in theology. The Christian communities should remain rooted culturally and socially in their people as a whole and above all, give the witness of an all-embracing love. Dialogue and cooperation should be the rule without interference of the Church in the affairs of the state. The missions should make a special contribution toward overcoming the scandal of a divided Christendom, so deeply felt in mission lands; as far as possible, the churches should cooperate and give common witness.



The Roman congregation responsible for the missions should seek ways and means to co-ordinate its activity with that of the other Christian missions. The Bishops' Synod should give special attention to the missionary activity of the Church. Those who have the over-all responsibility for the missions should have the help of a council that would assemble periodically and would be composed of the representatives of the missionary churches and of those in charge of the papal commitment to the missions—and not simply the Roman congregation responsible for the missions.

### BEYOND FORMULATIONS

This all-embracing program of reform within the Church adopted by Vatican II will mean a great deal of work in the years to come. But it must not be forgotten that a great deal was not formulated in the decrees and that precisely this may be of greater significance for the next few decades:

1. a new vitality is apparent in the Catholic Church, which transcends any formulations.
2. a new freedom in thought and discussion has shown itself to be extremely fruitful.
3. a new relationship to truth, both more historical and more existential, has become a reality.
4. the fragmentary and contingent character of all documents of the Magisterium was experienced in the concrete.
5. Vatican II quite consciously avoided claiming the infallibility defined by Vatican I.
6. the theology of the neo-scholastic schools showed itself incapable of dealing with new problems.
7. the authority of a vital theology and of the theologians has been decisively strengthened.
8. a new ideal of church leadership has become visible on all levels (instead of one-man-rule, common responsibility).
9. the Church has given up characteristically medieval positions in regard to civil society, the state, political life and scholasticism.
10. the justifiable concerns of the eastern churches and of the reformation have now found acceptance within the Church.

### WHAT NEXT?

As it enters this new phase, the Catholic Church will have to reckon with new *diffi-*

*culties and dangers.* Post-Vatican Catholicism can assume the same rigidity as post-tridentine Catholicism and thus fail in the task of listening anew to the Gospel of Jesus and of reading the signs of the times. A crisis of authority can touch only formal, external authority, not true inner authority. Misunderstanding on the part of the more traditionally oriented laity can be avoided through understanding and objective explanations *before* new decisions are put in force as well as by the emphasis of the positive element in negative measures.

The clarification of ambiguous conciliar formulation must be seen as a fruitful task of theology. The only thing which could precipitate a serious crisis is—as was seen in the Council—the tension between a Church eager for reform and a reluctant Curia. If the less numerous forces of renewal were not, in time, to gain the upper hand in Rome (an important way is by new appointments to higher offices in the Curia) and if attempts were to be made to restore—this would definitely lead to a serious crisis of confidence. Only a reform of the personnel and structures of the Curia can help to avoid such a crisis. Here as elsewhere renewal of spirits and conversion of heart are decisive.

The *tasks of the future* are enormous. The tasks of general character are quite obvious from the nature of the Council: the carrying out of the decrees in the entire Church: fundamental reform of canon law in accordance with theological principles (a commission has already been established); general renewal of theology, solidly biblical, historical and ecumenical.

### UNSOLVED PROBLEMS

*Particular questions not solved* by the Council are waiting for a positive solution: birth control seen from the point of view of personal responsibility; solving the problems connected with mixed marriages (validity and the education of the children); priestly celibacy in the Latin Church; reform of the Roman Curia in personnel and structure; the formal abrogation of the Index and censorship; reform of penitential practice: confession, indulgences, fast and abstinence; reform of dress and titles of clerical dignitaries; effective participation of the involved parties in the appointment



of bishops; transferring the papal election from the college of cardinals to the Bishops' Council, a body more representative of the Church.

If now, at the end of the Council, I think of the proposals made in *The Council, Reform and Reunion* (1960) which at the time could probably be regarded as extreme demands, I might say today: The Council has certainly not done everything which it could have done from the point of view of

the present situation. But it has done a great deal more than we expected at the time. At that time I wrote: "The Council will either be the fulfillment of a great hope or its disappointment. Mediocre results in the face of the seriousness of the world situation and the needs of Christianity would be a great disappointment." Today I can say: despite the real disillusionments, the Council has been the fulfillment of a great hope.

## ECUMENISM AND CONVERSIONS?

*The Decree (on Ecumenism) explicitly introduced the "distinctly-different-but-no-opposition" in order to avoid two still prevalent suspicions: that ecumenical work by Catholics is a new, more tactful "convert technique", or that the "ecumenical approach" frustrates the workings of the Holy Spirit who wishes to draw an individual Christian to full communion with the Roman Catholic Church.*

*Some of the latter suspicion is based on statistics: the number of new adult Catholics each year is waning. But don't we need more exact studies to determine what kind of person is dropping off the numerical lists? In the past, have not most of the adult converts been people who have had very little, if anything, to be converted from? Have not they been the non-Christian and/or the de-Christianized Christian? How many have ever been well-instructed, well-formed non-Catholic Christians with a clear-cut creed and code of moral action? Has the number of this type of adult really been getting smaller, or has not the number of secularized men been getting larger, only now they have been even more influenced by a slump in conviction and seriousness about religious matters? The prevalent question today is not "Roman Catholic or not?" but "Why religion at all?"*

*Thomas F. Stransky, C.S.P.  
The Clergy Review  
January, 1966*



# Pre-Catechumenate Instructions

## The Teachings of Jesus

Joseph V. Gallagher, C.S.P.

The people knew Jesus during his lifetime as a 'prophet'. To them, this meant that he was a spokesman for God, that through him God was telling them something important, and this is why they followed his words and wonders. To us today, the word 'prophet' means other things besides this, so we would be more apt to describe Jesus as a 'religious teacher' if we wanted to give his profession.

Teacher or prophet, what did his teaching consist of? Very briefly, what Jesus had to say can be summarized as follows:

### ANNOUNCEMENT OF GOD'S KINGDOM

► Reading from Mk. 1:15.

Jesus began his teaching by telling the people that something tremendously important was happening right here and now, viz., the arrival of the Kingdom of God.

What this meant to his audience was everything. This is what the Jewish people had been expecting, living and praying for since they left Egypt 1300 years before. This is what God had promised them and what they had accepted as their national goal over the centuries. What V-J Day was to the American people, i.e., the day of final victory over the last enemy and the return of peace, is only a small indication of what the arrival of the Kingdom meant to the Jews. It was the best possible news

they could hear; that is why it is called the 'gospel', an old word for 'good news'.

Although the Jewish people had been absorbed in the coming of the Kingdom for centuries, they were divided and unclear about what it was. This much they knew: it would mark the beginning of a new era under a new and great leader sent by God and they would experience new evidence of God's love for them and would be drawn closer to him and receive new gifts and blessings. The difficulty lay in this last part. There were all sorts of guesses and interpretations about what these new gifts from God would be. Human nature being what it is, people looked forward to the kind of things that appealed to them personally, and on this basis formed a picture of what the Kingdom would be like. Some thought in political terms, others in economic; some in spiritual, others in terms of worship and the observance of the law. Some thought it was to be exclusively for the Jewish people, others thought it would be for all. But all expected a new way of life from God, and this is what Jesus announced to them: 'it's here and if you want to be part of it change your ways and listen to my words'.

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*The first article in this series appeared in the Aug.-Sept., 1965 issue of Guide. Subsequent articles appear each month.*

*Your candid comments will be appreciated, so that revisions will benefit by your opinions and suggestions.*



## A NEW COMMANDMENT

► Reading from Jn. 13:34

The Jews had received commandments through Moses centuries before and had lived by them, badly at times, throughout their history. The commandments were the law of the nation as well as part of their faith. Now Jesus told them he had come to give them a new commandment: they must love one another. Not only had he come to establish a new relationship between God and man, but a new relationship among men, too. What it meant he would show them later on when he went so far as to give up his life for them.

### A REVERSAL OF VALUES

► Readings from Lk. 14:7-11; Mt. 5:1-12

In many of his talks to the people, Jesus described what the Kingdom would be like. It wouldn't be like the kingdoms men were used to where the rich and powerful were the favored ones. In the kingdom, the poor and the humble and the little people would come into their own. All the values that men are forced to accept by circumstances would be changed and true justice and equity would prevail. Everyone who has experienced injustice and looked to God to give a better life knew what Jesus was talking about.

### A NEW COVENANT

► Reading from Mt. 26:26

The covenant of Sinai was the constitution of the Jewish people. This is what defined their existence and purpose as a nation. This was the framework in which they lived and according to which their laws were made, their wars fought, their family and social life ruled. Now, Jesus told them he was going to give them a new covenant. This meant that everything in their life, both as individuals and as a people, would be transformed and receive a new direction and meaning. They were somewhat in the position of one of the new African nations that receives a new constitution that sets them up as a sovereign nation

after a previous history of colonial rule. It is a whole new era, and the announcement of this was momentous.

## A NEW PRESENCE

► Reading from Jn. 14:18-26

Under the old covenant God was with his people in a very real way. His presence in their midst was symbolized by the Ark of the Covenant which was first carried about with the Israelites in their travels, and later housed in the Temple at Jerusalem. It contained the tablets of the Commandments, some of the manna, and Aaron's staff. These were the souvenirs of what happened to them in the desert. It was a reminder to them of God's presence among them. They believed that the top of the Ark was a kind of throne over which God's presence rested. Jesus, having promised a new commandment and a new covenant, promised a new kind of presence, too. This was to be a much more intimate and personal presence than God's presence in the Ark of the Covenant. God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, would actually be living within the believer and the believer living within God. Thus, God himself was to be the new Promised Land for his people. They would now live in *him* rather than just in some geographical territory given by him.

### EVERLASTING LIFE

► Reading from Jn. 6:32-40

What this would mean to those who listened was that they would be raised up from death and live forever in the Kingdom of God. This was truly good news, because for a long time the Israelites were not clear about life after death. Only late in their history, after they saw their hopes of political and material immortality disappear in the destruction of Jerusalem and their exile to Babylon, did they begin to understand that their destiny reached beyond this world. Jesus specifically taught them that his kingdom would last forever and that although death will come to his followers, it is not final and they will be raised up to new life. This, too, was 'good news'.



## A NEW VISION OF GOD

We have seen how every time that God spoke to man in the Old Testament, he revealed something about himself. He disclosed his power and his love for his people. He continued disclosing more about himself in the teachings of Christ.

Readings from Jn. 14:8-11; 14:16-24

The great new truth Jesus reveals is that God is a multiple personality. He describes himself as the Son and refers to his Father in Heaven." He also speaks of the Spirit whom he will share with his followers. At the same time he makes it clear that he is equal to the Father and that through the Spirit they will all three come and dwell within his disciples. Naturally, this was not very clear to his followers but they accepted it as they accepted other

mysterious things about Jesus. They may not have understood but they believed because of their great trust in Jesus.

In the person of Jesus, God not only invites the human race into his life but he shows us something of what his life is like. It is a life that is fully lived by three different persons. They share completely not only what they have but what they are. This is as far as love can go and that is why St. John says God is love.

These are the central points in the teaching of Jesus. They are the topics to which he returned again and again in the course of his preaching. Like a good teacher, he kept repeating a few basic things in different ways. Many of the parables and other illustrations Jesus used describe one of these principal truths. As you read the Gospels remember to look for these, and see how often Jesus refers to them. This is a good indication of how important he considered them.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

*What has become of the kingdom of God since the time of Jesus?*

*What does it take to be "a good Christian"?*

*How does the Christian look on the good things of this world?*

*Is man any closer to God since Christ than he was before?*

*How is Christianity a covenant between God and man?*

*Can this covenant be improved upon?*

*How is God trying to change man through the Christian covenant?*

## BASIC BIBLIOGRAPHY:

*The Power and the Wisdom (Chap. III) —*  
*John L. McKenzie, S.J. (Bruce)*

*The Parables of Jesus — Raymond Brown, S.S.*  
*(Paulist Doctrinal Pamphlets)*



# Books Received

Christian Sacraments and Christian Personality

Bernard J. Cooke, S.J.

Holt, Rinehart and Winston. \$4.95

Father Cooke's long-awaited college text on the sacraments is an excellent piece of work. A leading exponent of the newer school of theology, his book manifests his familiarity with the biblical account and comprehensive mastery of the theological and liturgical traditions. He keeps in mind the total mystery of Christ, relating its many facets to each other and to the daily life and ultimate destiny of the Christian. The reader is not allowed to forget the basic themes: that the sacraments are actions of the risen Christ, in his Church; and that they are vital expressions of a covenant relationship in love, freedom and responsibility.

The writer is distinctly personal, departing from many traditional approaches in his divisions and in his emphases. For example, there is no separate treatment of the sacraments in general. Three chapters are devoted to grace. One is surprised that penance and matrimony are given only brief treatment; and no space is allotted to the sacrament of last anointing. Yet, on balance, the book marks a new and higher stage in the teaching of religion at the college level. And while not at all an easy book to master, it will richly repay anyone who reflects on its pages. Inquirers and "cradle" Catholics could well begin by reading the final chapter, a superb treatment on the meaning of worship.

Priestly Celibacy and Maturity

David P. O'Neill

Sheed and Ward. \$3.95

The author wisely disposes of many rhetorical, un-scriptural and dubiously-theological arguments sometimes advanced in support of clerical celibacy. But in advocat-

ing a frank, candid look at the matter, he does not reject the celibate life for even a majority of priests in the West.

The Gospels and St. Paul speak both of a married and an un-married clergy. And the author joins those who see priestly celibacy as best supported by regarding it as a striking sign of the eschatological kingdom — where God's love fills all abundantly. Legislation associates priesthood and celibacy for the West from the fourth century, and — after a stormy history — imposed it universally in the West in 1123.

Some of the best pages stress the necessity of a convinced, personal choice and seminary training that is psychologically sound. They reflect contemporary studies into the varied factors that contribute to the growth of a mature person — factors which, if ignored, explain many of the unhappy consequences of a vow made without sufficient self-knowledge or continued psychological growth. The writer offers suggestions regarding seminary reforms, pastoral work for deacons before priestly ordination, and the release from celibacy — in some instances — without loss of priestly status. A sound, forthright treatment of a subject that needs prayerful study and discussion.

John: "The Transitional Pope,"

Ernesto Balducci. Translated

by Dorothy White. McGraw-Hill. \$7.50

Father Balducci has written an interesting, helpful book on Pope John — even if it is not completely satisfactory. John's very simplicity can be misleading. He was God's gift to our world and it will take a long time to reveal the well-springs of that gift. Part of the defect of this book lies in its method. The writer isolates certain characteristics of John, and then — from the *Journal*, speeches, letters or diary — attempts to illustrate these aspects of the pope's significance. This does not always



me off. Nevertheless the volume does  
rim over with good things from and about  
ne of the greatest figures of our day. John  
as a genial, well-balanced, saintly priest  
ho had unique influence on the Church  
nd on the men of his time. And Father  
alducci enables us to know him a little  
etter.

iving Room Dialogues  
William B. Greenspun, C.S.P., and  
William A. Norgren, Editors  
National Council of Churches and  
he Paulist Press. \$1.00

Christian unity can be pursued in var-  
ous ways and at different levels. But it  
will scarcely advance if it is not understood  
nd practiced at the grassroots. This book  
s intended to aid ecumenically-minded  
atholic, Protestant and Orthodox lay  
Christians to meet, pray and to go forward  
together in mutual understanding. It is the  
result of various pilot projects successfully  
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The volume describes how a dozen or  
more Christians can meet as *Christians* in  
an informal, prayerful atmosphere to dis-  
cuss a vital religious reality. Bible reading  
and prayers for unity are followed by a  
serious discussion of a prepared topic stim-  
ulating participants to explain what a belief  
means to them in their daily lives. Agree-  
ments and differences are both manifested,  
but in a spirit of charity. Behind these  
neighborly meetings is the mutual convic-  
tion that God's spirit will bring us closer  
in His own time and in ways not clear to  
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dation for Dialogue. 2, Good Conversation  
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7, Why We Don't Break Bread Together.  
Writers for the resource papers include ex-  
perts like Robert MacAfee Brown, John  
Cogley and a team of able theologians.

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tor of the Department of Faith and Order  
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tian Unity. Most Rev. Bernard J. Flana-  
gan, Roman Catholic Bishop of Worcester,  
Mass., and a member of the Roman Catho-  
lic Bishop's Commission for Ecumenical  
Affairs, has given his imprimatur for the  
book.

Both the book and the plan it advo-  
cates constitute an ecumenical landmark.

Kerygma in Crisis  
Alfonso M. Nebreda, S.J.  
Loyola University Press. \$3.50

These lectures by a distinguished cate-  
chist carries catechetics into the area of the  
non-Christian who first needs to be pre-  
pared for Christ's good news. They are also  
concerned with baptized Christians who  
have not made a mature response to God's  
message or have not grown to maturity in  
faith. Recommended warmly especially for  
those who are considering a catechumenate  
for America.

J.T.M.

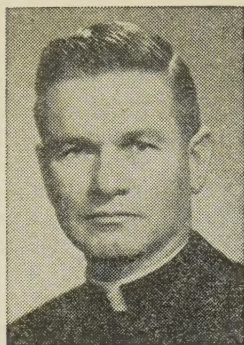
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# Guide Lights

## FUTURE OF THE INQUIRY CLASS. . .

In the parish of the future, with its liturgical catechumenate and kerygmatic preaching of the gospel message to the non-believer, is there any room for what used to be called the inquiry class? The answer to this depends upon what one understands by the term "inquiry class." If it means the course of instructions that has been the accepted way for introducing, instructing, and forming a non-Catholic with a view to his admission to the Church, the answer is no. Doubtless this institution will linger in some places for many a year, but it will not continue to command the acceptance it has enjoyed in the past. The reason is that we have learned a good deal about the art of catechetics and we have accumulated a fund of observations on the needs of people who come to the Church.

## PREACHING VS. EDUCATING. . .

We now recognize that it is not enough to gather a group of non-Catholics into a classroom and there attempt to communicate the wonder and reality of the Catholic Church to them through the medium of words. We have come to see that catechetics is primarily a religious activity, one which, for the non-believer, is an act of God revealing himself to him through the Church. We have accepted the principle that the Church for this reason must obtrude more of herself into the catechetical process, and we are seeking for ways to put this principle into practice. Thus, liturgy, Scripture, the Catholic laity,—all vital aspects of the Church—are becoming the foundations of a new parochial structure that will better express in its externals the true outlines of God's arena of revelation. The inadequacy of the inquiry class to perform this function lies in the simple fact that a class format by its very nature conveys only a limited aspect of the Church. Once we understand the role of the Church in cate-

chesis we would be foolish to accept such limitations in practice.

## AS AN INFORMATION FORUM. . .

However, the question proposed above is not completely answered by these considerations. If we narrow the content and purpose of an inquiry class so that it provides information about the Church, then there is every reason to believe that it can continue to provide this service in the most renewed parish of the future. This kind of inquiry class would be considerably streamlined to meet a particular and limited need, and would be shorn of all those features that aim at preparing the inquirer for admission to the Church. Its purpose would be to explain the Church as a phenomenon,—what Catholics do and why,—to those persons who are interested in learning something about the Church. It would make no effort to prepare the inquirer for anything more than a better understanding of the Church, and hence, a greater sympathy.

## THE MORMON EXAMPLE. . .

A very good example of what this would entail is the Mormon exhibit at the 1964-65 New York World's Fair. Anyone who went through that pavilion received a courteous and interesting tour of Mormon history, beliefs, and practices. The purpose was purely informative; the visitor had no sense that he was part of a religious action. Yet he came away with a good understanding of this church and a greater sympathy for its members and their works. This is the kind of thing that could and should be provided by the Catholic Church for those who would like to know something about us. It could be an integral function of a parish as a kind of basic public relations program. It would not be directly connected with the parish catechumenate since most of those approaching the Church from religious motives would probably already have this basic information. It would not suppose that any inquirer would proceed further when it ended. It would not be primarily a religious activity but an educational one,—the kind of course that could be given by a well-informed pagan and still achieve its purpose.



## TEACHING ABOUT CHRISTIANITY. . .

Since the purpose of such an inquiry class is informative and presumes no further upon the inquirer, the content can be quite limited and the treatment relatively superficial. It would include an explanation of the essential visible features of the Church, —the life and teachings of Christ, the Bible, the Church, something about Church history, the purpose and structure of the Mass, something about each of the sacraments, a discussion of Catholic marriage and an explanation of the foundations of Catholic morality. Such a survey would occupy something like 6-10 sessions and this is really enough for this type of course. Any of these topics can be expanded upon or quickly passed over to suit the interest and response of the particular audience. The instructor's only concern is that the over-all picture that is conveyed is balanced and accurate. If such an inquiry class can provide the interested inquirer with a reasonable explanation of the important things a Catholic believes and does, then it is worth its salt and should keep an honored place in the Church.

## A ONE DIMENSION INTRODUCTION. . .

In the topical outline above are many of the same subjects that are treated in the catechumenate but they are not dealt with in the same way. While they belong to salvation history, in the inquiry class they are described in their bare historical content. The added meaning which they have for the believing Catholic is simply stated and that's the end of it. On the other hand, in the catechumenate, the catechumen is led through these events step by step as a disciple by the believing Church, in order that he may come to see their salvific significance for him. What the Church hopes from the inquirer is understanding and sympathy; what she expects from the catechumen is faith. And for this she uses her full resources. The inquiry class strives to explain the Church in acceptable human terms, i.e., it presents a modest apologetic and stops. But the catechumenate wants to make disciples, so the full weight of the Church's faith in the supernatural dimension of these events is communicated to the catechumen. More material is covered in greater depth and in much more personal and challenging fashion. This is the "convert class" of the Church today and we can expect to see greater developments in this direction in the future. But for those who are not ready to be "converts", the type of inquiry class here described can serve as a useful introduction to Catholicism and a help toward

better understanding and appreciation of our Catholic faith.

## THE PROBLEM OF PRE-EVANGELIZATION . . .

Such an inquiry class would be one way of preparing non-believers or nominal believers for conversion. There are others. Such things as discussion clubs, apologetical dialogue, a parish forum or lecture series, are all useful tools that recommend themselves for this purpose. Where the number of inquirers is small, the approach can be as limited or as comprehensive as their particular needs require. In every case, this phase of the apostolate is only a preparatory one in which the ground is prepared so that the gospel has a fair chance of taking hold. Anything that will achieve this is good.

Here we touch upon the whole problem of pre-evangelization,—that initial step by which the Church establishes contact and cultivates an audience for her message, and the activities suggested above only scratch the surface of this monumental task. Let us be very clear about that. There is no present technique or line of action that begins to meet this challenge in any kind of adequate way. The truth of the matter is that missionary work in the parish still depends upon people coming to us. This is perhaps its biggest weakness and the area in which most new ground must be broken. Whoever heard of a missionary waiting at home for the heathen to come to him? The very word "missionary" means "one who is sent," and this means that he goes out somewhere. Actually, this is still somewhat true in the parish. Even though the bulk of any program is to be found within the walls of the "plant", what brings the inquirers to the plant is the contact and example of the members of the parish who have been out among them in their daily lives. This is the witness of Catholic living and it remains the biggest single factor in bringing people to the Church. However, this approach is always indirect. There is need also for a much more direct going out by the Catholic laity and to some extent, too, by the clergy. There is need to bring the Church to where people are.

As renewal grows and with it house liturgy, living room discussions, community projects and other kinds of "extra plant" activity, there will also be a development in direct evangelization of non-Catholics on their home ground. This would represent a real breakthrough in the apostolate. While our structures are still within the building they can achieve but limited results.

JOSEPH V. GALLAGHER, C.S.P.



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